

NSC BRIEFING

10 January 1957

NEAR EAST REACTION TO US POLICY

- I. Official reaction--so far at a minimum--reflects reserve, "wait and see" attitude.

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II. Syria is apparently awaiting Egyptian guidance.

- A. Foreign minister Bitar has stated that force cannot be used to confine only Soviet aggression, and that UN charter and principles must be maintained.
- B. Press comment in both Egypt and Syria following same line.
 - 1. Charge that policy is device to protect Western interests.
 - 2. Threat from Soviets only "imaginary".
 - 3. State no vacuum exists in Middle East.

4. Agree economic aid is acceptable, if no infringements of sovereignty.
5. But fear US-Sov "cold war" being transferred to Middle East.
6. Emphasize, however, that Israeli threat is central problem.

III. Yemen ambassador in Egypt, after 9 Jan discussion on Eisenhower doctrine with Soviet ambassador, urged the United States to speak against the "flagrant aggression" against Yemen by Britain's Aden protectorate.

IV. Jordan's King Hussain, and Chief of Staff Nuwar, welcome US policy.

A. King told Ambassador Mallory President's statement was "admirable", and Jordan was happy to see US--a country concerned with "right and justice"--fill gap in Middle East.

1. Nuwar said he and the king were very pleased, and ready to accept immediate economic and military assistance.
2. King probably hopes policy will give him chance to avoid Jordanian dependence on other Arabs.

V. Official reaction from Lebanon and Iraq favorable.

A. Foreign Minister Malik said Lebanon is prepared to cooperate with the United States on the basis of the Eisenhower Middle East plan, within the framework, of course, of its full sovereignty. Plan very important; "we do not fear the Americans represent a menace to Middle East countries."

1. Pro-Egyptian former prime minister Yafi made a moderate statement, but wanted US to declare readiness to use force against "imperialist" countries as well.

B. Iraqi Premier Nuri reaction (8 Jan) one of "warm approval." Eagerly looking forward to implementation.

VI. Israel has not yet made official statement. Israeli press is moderately critical.

- A. Main theme: while isolation of Mid-East from Soviet encroachment is fine, this does not solve problems within the area.
 - 1. Critical of omission of settlement area's fundamental problems: Suez Canal and Israel-Arab relations.
 - 2. Also critical of proposal to leave solution of intra-regional problems to UN.

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